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Cooking Effects on Vitamin B₁

Cooking destroys less vitamin B₁ or thiamin value of foods than has been supposed, according to a recent study made by the Bureau of Home Economics. Some of this vitamin goes into the cooking water, but this can be recovered if the "pot liquor" is served. But the cook who adds a "pinch of soda" to hold the green color in the vegetables reduces thiamin values considerably.

The Bureau made the vitamin tests on meats, cereal products, dried beans, potatoes, carrots, snap beans, spinach, and green peas. Both cooked and uncooked samples of each product were tested.

Carrots cooked in very little water lose none of their thiamin, either when boiled or cooked in a pressure cooker.

Potatoes, pared and boiled, lose completely about 20 percent of their original thiamin, and another 10 to 15 percent may be lost unless the cooking liquid is used in some way. Baking caused only about 15 percent loss of vitamin B₁ in potatoes.

About 20 percent of the thiamin value in spinach is destroyed by cooking, and 5 to 10 percent more may be lost in the cooking liquid unless this is used. The loss in the cooking liquor may be avoided by cooking spinach in just enough water to serve it.

Green peas retain 80 percent of their thiamin if soda is not used in cooking them, but 90 percent can be saved if no more water than is absolutely necessary is used in the cooking and if all the juices are served with the peas.

